

**WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING OF
August 29, 2003**

Conference Call

Minutes

Commissioners: Charlotte Coker, Chair; Ellis Casson; Dallas Barnes; and J. Reiko Callner. A quorum was present.

Staff: Dariush Khaleghi, Acting Executive Director; Tanya Calahan, Clerk of the Commission; Jean Ciallella, Human Resources; Cheryl Strobert, Program Manager; Idolina Reta, Special Assistant to the Executive Director; Renee Knight, Administrative Services Manager; and Susan Carlson, Assistant Attorney General.

Guests: Carol Jolly, Governor's Executive Policy Office

(Audio tape one – side one)

OPENING AND WELCOME

Commissioner Coker called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. She welcomed guest Carol Jolly of the Governor's Executive Policy office to the meeting and invited her to comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commissioners considered the minutes of the July 15-16, 2003 Commission meeting. Clerk of the Commission Tanya Calahan commented that she needs to add additional language to the minutes regarding the Commissioners' workshop and recommends that the Commissioners set aside the minutes until the September 2003 Commission meeting. The Commissioners agreed to this proposal.

The Commissioners considered the minutes of the July 25, 2003 Commission meeting. Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2003 Commission meeting. Commissioner Casson seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

Tanya Calahan reviewed the follow up items from the July 25, 2003 Commission meeting. Commissioner Callner will draft a letter of concern regarding Respondent's work environment in the Hanbey v. Allvest Inc. case. The letter will go out under all Commissioners' signature.

Program Manager Cheryl Strobert commented that an email went to the Operations Managers that informed them that letters of concern to Respondents will be sent under the Commissioners' signatures.

CASE CLOSURES

Commissioner Callner commented about the reasonable cause finding in the case of Kristen Rytter v. Sequoia House Condominium Association. On the last page it says "no reasonable cause" instead of "reasonable cause." Staff will correct the finding.

Commissioner Callner spoke about the Mary McKnew v. Victoria Clipper case in which a reasonable cause finding was entered. The case involves failure to accommodate a disabled passenger on a high speed ferry route between Seattle and Victoria B.C. and respondent's accommodation policies. She asked that staff keep the Commissioners apprised regarding this case.

Commissioner Callner then made a motion to approve the case list for the period of July 21-August 22, 2003. Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

AGENCY UPDATE

Acting Executive Director Dariush Khaleghi commented about the US Department of Housing and Urban Development conference that he and other staff from the Commission are attending in San Diego, California.

Mr. Khaleghi spoke about the agency's budget situation and highlighted six different budget scenarios. The scenarios identified different ways to reduce spending within the agency to balance the budget.

Mr. Khaleghi shared that staff presented the scenarios to keep the Commissioners informed regarding the budget situation and are not asking the Commissioners to make a decision about the budget scenarios.

Commissioner Coker noted that it would be the Commissioners' decision about what to pay the Executive Director and whether or not to have both an Executive Director and a Deputy Director in the agency.

Commissioner Coker commented that the Commissioners need to discuss whether or not to have an Executive Director and a Deputy Director. She wants this item on the agenda for the Commissioners to discuss at an upcoming Commission meeting.

Commissioner Barnes asked about budget supplemental money and whether the agency has applied for additional funds. The agency has not.

Special Assistant Idolina Reta commented about Faith Based Initiatives through HUD. Funding is available for this project. Carol Jolly commented that the Governor's office has declined to start an Initiatives Office in Washington. However, she will put Ms. Reta in touch with the contact person at the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) that is involved in this effort. DSHS receives funding from HUD for the Initiative.

Ms. Reta reviewed the 2003-05 Performance Agreement between the Human Rights Commission and the Governor's office. The agreement includes goals to improve service.

Ms. Reta reviewed the customer service survey results. Surveys will go out to complainants and respondents. She noted that Intake staff received high customer service marks.

Other input from survey participants included comments about complaints taking too long to process; comments about the desire for early complaint resolution; and utilizing email more. Survey results showed that 100% Respondents that returned surveys have email and 60% of complainants have email. Staff noted that the agency can utilize technology to better customer service. Also the new agency complaint data base can help track complaints better.

(Audio tape one – side two)

Jean Ciallella spoke about the "Human Resources (HR) 2005" and Competitive Contracting.

HR 2005 will look more like the private sector. Rules will change in dealing with union and no union employees. The current state job classes will be reduced to occupational categories. The salary ranges will look more like Washington Management Services (WMS) and exempt positions. This will allow more latitude with salary adjustments. Under the current State of Washington personnel system, there is no reward system for outstanding performance by those in classified service. Employees receive yearly 5% increment raises on their anniversary dates. However, once they are reach the top step, no further raises are received unless the Legislature approves cost of living adjustments.

Ms. Ciallella noted that agencies will have more latitude in hiring from employment registers. Notably, agencies won't be restricted to consider only seven names from a register to fill a position.

Ms. Ciallella highlighted the competitive contracting process. There will be training through Department of Personnel and General Administration. Public meetings will be held across the state regarding proposed rules on competitive contracting.

Program Manager Cheryl Strobert commented about current staff grievances. There are a total of nine grievances. Five of those were renewed. There will be a meeting to see if some of the grievances can be combined into one since some of the themes are similar.

She also spoke about the EEOC and HUD contracts. Currently, the agency needs 75-80 cases to complete the EEOC contract by September 30, 2003. The agency is approved for 801 cases.

REMAINING 2003 COMMISSION MEETINGS

Discussion took place regarding the mechanism to use for approving cases up to September 30, 2003; which is the last day of the contract performance period for the agency's EEOC and HUD contracts..

The Commissioners discussed the staff proposal to delegate authority to the Acting Executive Director to approve last minute cases for the EEOC and HUD contracts. There was discussion about having a special meeting to approve those extra cases as an alternative to this proposal.

The Commissioners also discussed their meeting locations for the remainder of 2003 and whether to change those locations. Holding a meeting on September 30, 2003 in Sea Tac will allow time to approve cases for the EEOC and HUD contracts.

After discussion, Commissioner Callner made a motion to cancel the September 25-26, 2003 Commission meeting in Moses Lake. Commissioner Casson seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Callner made a motion that the Commissioners hold a special meeting on September 30, 2003 in Sea Tac. Commissioner Casson seconded. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Callner made a motion to move the October 23-24, 2003 Commission meeting to Sea Tac. Commissioner Casson seconded the motion. Commissioner Barnes opposed the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

Jean Ciallella commented about the Executive Director recruitment process. She met with Ted Koska of Executive Search Services to sign the contract for the search. She spoke about the timeline for the Executive Director recruitment. Tanya Calahan will send the Commissioners a copy of the timeline.

November 13, 2003 is the date that the Commissioners will interview the final Executive Director candidates. This will take place in Sea Tac. Ms. Calahan commented that this will be a special meeting and she will publish the appropriate notices.

Discussion took place about the Commissioner and Management workshop scheduled for September 17, 2003 in Olympia. Tanya Calahan will work with Cheryl Strobert to locate a low or no cost facilitator for the workshop.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Y. Calahan
Clerk of the Commission